

## PHS Rozmowa Club Offers Chance to Polish Your Polish Skills

By Matthew Gryczan

Would you like to learn some Polish phrases before you visit the old country, or do you yearn to sing the "Sto Lat" birthday song for the kids or grandkids? Or maybe you would just like to practice your Polish so you don't get rusty?

Well now's your chance – and best of all it's free to PHS members!

Starting this month, the society is launching Rozmowa, a language club that teaches Polish in a fun and informal environment. The first get-together will be at 7 p.m. Feb. 25 at Polish Falcons Hall, 957 W. Fulton St. Snacks will be provided, and there will be a cash bar for participants.

Monthly meetings will be held at 7 p.m. on the last Tuesday of each month at the hall.

For your first lesson, "Rozmowa" means small talk or pleasant conversation in

Polish, and the emphasis of the club will be social as well as instructive. PHS members can join for free, and annual dues for non-PHS members is \$20 – the cost of an annual PHS membership.

The get-togethers technically will be one hour starting at 7 p.m., but club organizers say participants can stay longer if they choose.

Every meeting will start with the first stanza of the Polish national anthem: "Jeszcze Polska nie zginęła." This phrase loosely translates to "Poland is not yet lost" and is a common toast.

There will be short introductions regarding upcoming celebrations and events. In the month before Easter, club organizers will teach words about Easter and explain the tradition of Święconka, the blessing of the food baskets. In July, instructors will explain the feast of Matka Boska Zielna on Aug.

15. October will emphasize Polish Independence Day, and November will center on words relating to Christmas.

Participants who provide emails will be sent a one-page document one week prior to the meeting

with that month's words and phrases. The document will also be posted on the PHS website.

Do zobaczenia tam!



*PHS Rozmowa Club will meet at the Polish Falcons Feb 7th*

## April 15 Deadline for PHS Board Elections and Scholarship Applications

By Matthew Gryczan

If you are a member of the Polish Heritage Society, April 15 means more than the deadline to file federal taxes.

That date marks the cutoff for submission of names for candidates who want to run for office on the PHS board and for students who wish to be con-

sidered for PHS scholarships.

Those who are interested in submitting their names for consideration for a seat on the 11-member board must be active members who are current with annual dues or who have lifetime memberships. The names of individuals running for office will be published in the May newsletter before

the election takes place on May 19.

There are six board positions open this election cycle: President, First Vice President, Recording Secretary, and three Director seats. President Teresa Bonham said the society is encouraging any member in good standing to consider running for any of the positions.

Recording Secretary Matthew Gryczan will not be running for re-election, leaving that seat vacant when his term ends in May. There currently is a Director seat vacant.

Nominations for officers and directors on the 11-member board will close on April 15,

*(Continued on page 2)*

**Polish Heritage Society  
of Grand Rapids  
PO Box 1844  
Grand Rapids MI  
49501-1844**

<https://polishheritagesociety.com>

Email us at [phsgrandrapids@gmail.com](mailto:phsgrandrapids@gmail.com).

The Polish Heritage Society of Grand Rapids promotes Polish/Lithuanian culture in the metro Grand Rapids. The Society meets on the 3rd Monday of every month except for December and general meetings in June and October. The society publishes this newsletter monthly. We invite story ideas and content contributions. For more information, please contact Matthew Gryczan, Richard Panek or Marilyn Lignell by writing to [phsgrandrapids@gmail.com](mailto:phsgrandrapids@gmail.com).

**President**  
Teresa Bonham

**1st VP**  
John Theisen

**2nd VP**

**Treasurer**  
Michael Jasperse

**Corresponding Secretary**  
Susan Ulanowicz

**Recording Secretary**  
Matthew Gryczan

**Director**  
Rosemary Maciejewski

**Director**  
Angela Walejewski-Zasuwa

**Director**  
Thaddeus Broda

**Director**  
Eric Tetsworth

**Director**

*(April 15 continued from page 1)*

and individuals interested in serving on the board can submit their names by writing an email to [phsgrandrapidsl@gmail.com](mailto:phsgrandrapidsl@gmail.com) before the deadline.

Regarding scholarships, the society annually gives out scholarships to students attending institutions of higher learning as a way of supporting Polish heritage.

To be eligible, applicants must:

- be of Polish American descent, reside in Allegan, Barry, Ionia, Kent, Montcalm, Muskegon or Ottawa county.
- plan to attend or currently attend an accredited 2-year

trade/vocational program, 2 or 4-year college or university.

Applicants need to provide:

- the scholarship application form and a copy of academic transcripts that show a minimum 2.75 GPA.
- two letters of recommendation from a teacher, mentor, coach, or advisor and a brief statement signed by the applicant that delineates his or her Polish heritage.
- a 200-word essay that shares career goals and why they are deserving of a scholarship.

After the April 15 deadline, the PHS scholarship committee will review applications and notify recipients of the scholarships

and financial aid offices of the institutions by May 15.

Winners will be asked to provide a photo of themselves for a story in the Echo newsletter and will be invited to attend the Dozynki Polish Harvest Festival in August for special recognition.

Applications are available online at <https://polishheritagesociety.com> or from the counseling offices at high schools or post high school institutions. Applications can be emailed to [phsgrandrapids@gmail.com](mailto:phsgrandrapids@gmail.com) or physically mailed to Polish Heritage Society of Grand Rapids, PO Box 1844, Grand Rapids MI 49501.

## Grant Committee to Further the Mission of the Polish Heritage Society

Organizations or causes that further the mission of the PHS and need financial assistance should submit applications to the newly formed Grant Committee for consideration by March 1.

For more information on the PHS grant criteria and the form to submit a request, please refer to the society's website at <https://polishheritagesociety.com> and click on the Community tab in the main menu.

The society supports organizations and causes that carry on the traditions introduced by Polish immigrants to Grand Rapids, preserve the history of con-

tributions made by local Polish-Americans, promote Polish culture and cultivate ties between Grand Rapids and Poland.

For example, the PHS board approved a grant of \$250 for the restoration of the Stanley Ketchel monument at Holy Cross Cemetery and a \$225 grant to partly defray the costs of monthly Polish cooking classes at the Sons & Daughters Hall.

Grants are awarded annually to organizations and causes based on need and how the donations will be used to further the aims of the society.

Grantees are required to fill out

the PHS Grant Request Form to outline their requests for funding. The form is available on the PHS website, or a hard copy of the form can be obtained by sending a request to the Society's email address: [phsgrandrapids@gmail.com](mailto:phsgrandrapids@gmail.com).

After they fill out the form, applicants can send it to the society's email address or mail it to the society's address at PO Box 1844, Grand Rapids MI 49501-1844.

To be eligible, all grant requests must be submitted in writing by March 1 to be considered for 2025.

The PHS Grant Committee will  
*(Continued on page 3)*

# PHS Membership News



By Marilyn Lignell

The Grand Rapids Griffins Polish American night was held on January 31. Proudly, section 123 was filled with the color red. The annual Polish American night was attended by 160+ people doing their best to cheer the team onto Victory.

Even though the Griffins lost to the Colorado Eagles 2-0, it was still a fun night with some Polish activities to liven things up. The PRCUA Malbork Dance ensemble entertained the crowd with several dances at the top of the escalator before the game.

Busia Queen Dolly Pelton and

former Queen Lucy Preston wrote the Zamboni around the ice rink. Dolly, adorned in a beautiful Polish outfit, said she enjoyed her ride. "I had many strangers come up to ask about my costume, what beautiful colors, and what it was all about. They were given a short history of Poland."

Pulaski Queen Dannielle Clifford and Court Lauren Hansen attended the game and were available for pictures further promoting Polish Pride as well as the annual Pulaski Days in October.

Organizer Anthony Zasuwa said that the participation has been growing every year, and even though the Griffins lost, everyone seemed to have a really fun night. This event would not be the success it is without his efforts. Thank you Anthony, your work helps keep Polish Pride alive in Grand Rapids!

The Pulaski Days of Grand Rapids held their annual election on January 23, 2025 at St. George's Hall. After serving as Pulaski Days Chair from 2017-2024, the gavel was handed from Michelle Misk-Kershner to Kaitlin Milke.

Michelle has served on Pulaski Days and been active in the Polish community for over 30 years. Luckily she isn't going far, she will be bringing the same passion and leadership to the board as the President.

Kaitlyn, who has served as president the last two years is excited to bring some new energy to the board and hopefully encourage some of the younger generation to become involved. She said, "I hope to continue the nourishment and promotion of Polish Heritage. I am also thankful for the support from the Polish Heritage Society and the Polish community."



*Kershner passes the gavel*

PHS lifetime members Rich and



*Halina Jayne Panek*

Mary Panek are now Grandparents. Their son Mitchell and his Wife Katey welcomed Halina Jayne Panek into the world on January 30th. She was named after Rich's Mother Halina. Congratulations to the Paneks!

We welcome new member John Lawton to the Polish Heritage Society. Joining as a lifetime member is Sarah Sharpe. Please have your membership renewals in by February 28 and we will send your new membership cards out shortly after!!

*(Grants Continued from page 2)*

consider all eligible requests in the month of March and render its recommendations to PHS board by its April meeting. The PHS Grant Committee consists of the PHS Treasurer, a PHS board member and three PHS members taken from the general membership rolls who have agreed to serve on the committee.

The PHS board will consider the recommendations at its April meeting and vote to:

- fund the request in its entirety;
- modify the amount funded or scope of work;
- or decline to support the request.

All organizations or individuals who make eligible grant requests

will be notified of the outcome by April 30 either by phone or in writing.

At its September meeting, the Polish Heritage Society board created a new sub-committee to formalize a system where grant money is distributed to organizations and projects that further the mission of the PHS and need financial assis-

tance.

Organizations and projects that have received PHS grants are as varied as the Polish National Aid Society in particular, Pulaski Days Halls in general, restoration of the Soldiers Monument at Holy Cross Cemetery, St. Michael's Ukrainian Church for its war effort, and a local chapter of the YWCA.



## Local Polish Researcher Publishes Book Presenting New Findings on Polish History

By Richard Panek

Peter Dobek Ph.D., is a historian who lives in Kalamazoo. Two years ago, when he was a faculty advisor to the Polish Club at GVSU he, along with some of his students, toured the Heritage display at the PHS Dozynki festival. He was quite impressed with the scope and quality of the exhibit. Speaking with a PHS Cultural Ambassador at the festival, Dobek shared his interest in the Hussar display and specifically, Polish culture during the Jagiellonian Dynasty.

Dobek is a former Visiting Assistant Professor at Grand Valley State University, where he taught undergraduate history courses with a focus on Poland and medieval Europe. He earned his Ph.D. in History from Western Michigan University, where he also taught. His specialty is historical research related to Public Houses (Inns, taverns, and alehouses), Food and Drink.

Dr. Dobek has written and edited several articles, a book chapter, and a manuscript on Polish history, culture, and public houses, and has received multiple grants and awards for his work.

When he visited Dozynki, he was in the process of researching the significance of the Polish Public Houses, Taverns and Alehouses of that period. His earlier articles on the topic focused on the activities in these Pubs and Taverns in University towns in Europe during the period.

His latest work, *The Public House in Central Europe: Inns, Taverns, and Alehouses in Cracow during the Jagiellonian Dynasty*, was just published.

The following is the publisher's summary of the work taken from their website:

“Public houses—inns, taverns, and alehouses—during the Jagiellonian Dynasty (1385-1572) in the city of Cracow functioned as important establishments in the life of the city. While the city continued to prosper as the preferred residence of the dynasty, inhabitants, travelers, and migrants increasingly relied on the public houses of the conurbation to meet their many needs and desires.

Although scholars have studied these establishments throughout Europe during various epochs, they have neglected to analyze the public houses in Cracow during the Jagiellonian era. Dr. Dobek's book provides a comprehensive examination of a multitude of sources to reconstruct qualitatively and quantitatively the public houses of the city.

This reconstruction reveals public houses' role in the history of the city, their locations, edifices, related activities, and people, including publicans, clients, and others. This book places the establishments of Cracow at the center of a deeply debated topic about the extent and types of violence in public houses, which further addresses their many functions. Contrary to some contemporary accounts and

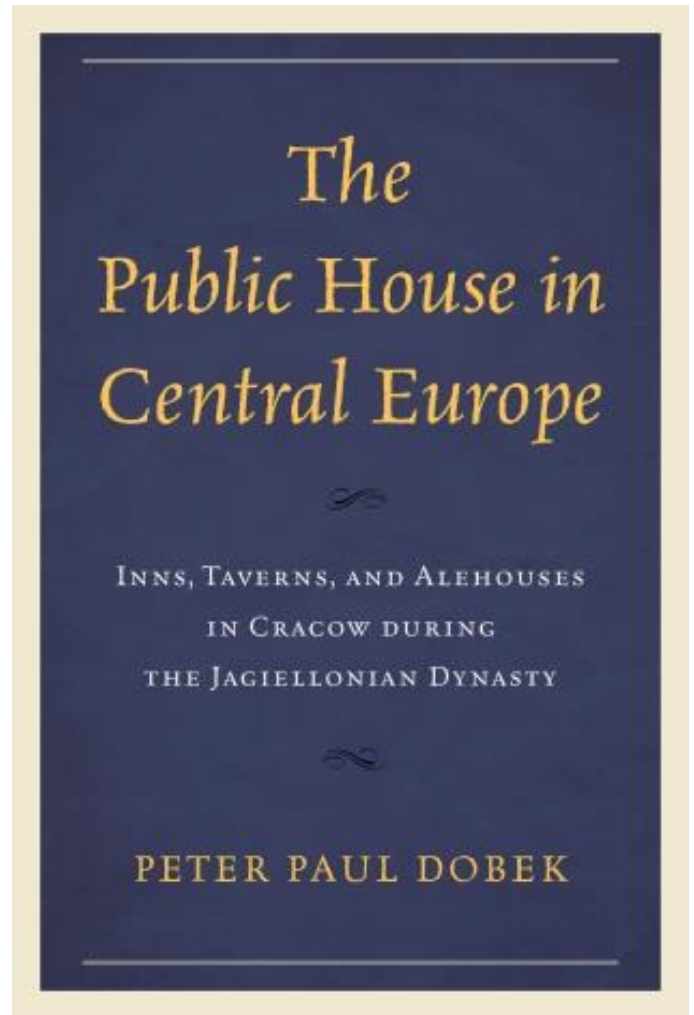
some current secondary literature, the establishments were fundamental to the everyday life of the city and were not centers of nefarious acts.”

According to Dobek, “Unlike taverns of today, these sites were hotbeds of political and social movements that would have far-reaching influence on European culture and civilization.” Not unlike today, the students back then also apparently had a propensity for overimbibing and rowdiness but

“violence was found to be rare.” said Dobek.

A hardcover edition of the book can be ordered thru the publisher at [rowman.com](http://rowman.com). It is also available on the Kindle platform through Amazon.

Dr. Dobek has been invited to lecture on the topic of Polish Public Houses during the Jagiellonian Period for the PHS History lecture during Polish Heritage Month in October.



*Dobek's book published by Rowman and Littlefield*



Peter Dobek Ph. D.

## *PHS Detroit Polonia Bus Trip*

*Saturday, April 5, 2025*

8 a.m. -- Depart Park & Ride Lot via Motorcoach to Orchard Lake, MI  
10:30 a.m. -- Arrive at Polish Institute of Culture and Research for tour of exhibits.  
1:00 to 2:30 p.m. - Hearty family style lunch at Polish Village Café in Hamtramck  
2:30 to 4:30 pm.-- Tour of Hamtramck Historical Museum, then shop at Polish Art Center,  
Srodek's Polish Market, Tekla Vintage Shop  
7 p.m. EST -- Arrival back in Grand Rapids

*TOUR COST INCLUDES MUSEUM ADMISSION, LUNCH, AND TRANSPORTATION*



*Polish Institute of Culture and Research Galleria*



*Lunch Stop in Hamtramck*

\*\*\*\*\*Reservation Deadline Saturday, March 15, 2025\*\*\*\*\*

Make Check payable to: *Polish Heritage Society*

mail to Richard Panek 6620 Knockadoon Drive NE, Rockford, MI 49341

Call Richard with questions at (616) 490-3231 or email [rwpanek@gmail.com](mailto:rwpanek@gmail.com)

Name\_\_\_\_\_

Phone #\_\_\_\_\_

# of Tickets @ \$80.00 each\_\_\_\_\_

Amount Enclosed\_\_\_\_\_

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Join the Polish Heritage Society to receive our monthly newsletter and other benefits!

**Annual Student Membership for full-time students through college \$5**

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#### **ONLINE**

You can join the Polish Heritage Society online by going to our website at <https://polishheritagesociety.com/>, filling out the Membership form and paying by using the PayPal Button.

#### **MAIL**

Fill out this form and send a personal check made out to the Polish Heritage Society to this address:

Polish Heritage Society of Grand Rapids  
P.O. Box 1844  
Grand Rapids MI 49501-1844

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

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PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

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